DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 261 016 SP 026 229

AUTHOR Securro, Samuel, Jr.; Owen, Isaiah
TITLE Student Perception of Early Field Experience Components, Teacher Education Program, West Virginia State College.
PUB DATE Oct 82
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Student Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Early Field Experience; *Teacher Candidates

ABSTRACT

An 18-item questionnaire, responded to by 50 teacher education students, sought information on the impact of early field experiences on teacher candidates and on the early professional growth opportunities provided by these field experiences. Students perceived their involvement in such experiences as beneficial and valuable, although they were not overly aware of the purposes and goals of early field experiences. Contributions to professional development included observation of teaching styles, methods, and skills; development of rapport with learners and teachers; and awareness of learners' individual differences. Students were satisfied with the support and assistance provided them by college supervisors. Exposure to a wide range of professional practice depended on the setting of the field experience. There were no opportunities for interacting with school administrators or working with more than one teacher. (CB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED261016

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STUDENT PERCEPTION OF EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS, TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM, WEST VIRGINIA STATE COLLEGE

Dr. Samuel Securro, Jr.

Dr. Isaiah Owen

WEST VIRGINIA STATE COLLEGE

* * *

October, 1982

* * *

Institute, West Virginia

SP 026 229

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Securro

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Introduction

To make professional education programs more practical, stimulating, and realistic, the inclusion of early field experiences for teacher education candidates is a must. Participating directly in a school or agency setting can be a valuable learning experience for candidates as they explore teaching as a career and absorb the "first approximations" of a teacher. Although disagreements exist concerning the exact efficacy of field work, there are few classroom teachers, students, or teacher educators that would deny its value in the development of teachers.

Given that these experiences will continue to be required in the future (and expanded), there is a need to ascertain more specifically their impact upon our students----through their eyes. Students completing their initial field requirements, are, no doubt, forming perceptions and mental sets that will be carried with them as they progress through the program and into later experiences. It is important to check these outcomes and make appropriate adjustments.

The specific questions of interest in this survey are:

1. What is the impact of early field experiences upon teacher education candidates?
2. What early professional growth opportunities are provided in these field experiences?

Procedure and Methodology

To answer these questions, a questionnaire was designed which consisted of 18 items, each arranged on a five-point, bi-polar adjective scale. These items were selected for their revelence to field outcomes for the early field experience in Education 201 (Developmental Observational Experience) and Education 202 (Tutorial Learning Experience).

In the spring of 1982, a group of teacher education students (N=50), were given the questionnaires following their final examination in Education 202. They had completed their field work for both Education 201 and 202 and were instructed to assess these experiences via the instrument. They were instructed to complete the questionnaire anonymously. All 50 questionnaires were returned, but three were unusable because of blurred or intelligible responses.

Frequencies were constructed for each question by tallying student responses (N = 47) across the five-point positions. Next, values for positions 4 and 5 were added, which gave a "high" or positive rating for a particular item. Values for positions 1 and 2 were then combined to represent a "low" or negative rating. Finally, "negative" values were subtracted from "positive" values and a composite score was obtained for each item on the questionnaire. These procedures can be seen in the example below. Position 3 values were considered "neutral" and were not included in the analysis.

Example:

Item 1: "How would you rate the field experience program?"

Not much value	1	2	3	4	5	Valuable
Frequencies	2	0	6	13	25	
	-2			38	=	+36

*All of the items in the questionnaire were summarized in this manner, and are illustrated in Figure 1, ranked from high to low values. It should be noted that low or "negative" rankings for a particular item do not necessarily imply weaknesses. A range of outcomes was selected for assessment, some of which are not reflected in the stated purposes and activities of the field experiences. Whether these conditions existed or not was of interest, and they may point to future areas of program review and improvement.

Table 1 summarizes the results obtained from #19 on the questionnaire which was designed to ellict a personal reaction concerning the effect of field experiences.

Results

Positive ratings by students were expected for item numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12, and 16 in Figure 1. These items reflect the outcomes that should follow the satisfactory completion of field experiences. However, item #16 (Familiarity with Goals) was perceived lower than expected. "Negative" or low ratings (below the median) were obtained

Item Number	Description	Value Score	
13	Developing Rapport with Learners	40	
3	Support/Contact From College Supervisor	40	
6	Understand Various Types of Students	39	
2	Requirements for all Teacher Candidates	39	
1	Overall Value of the Program	36	
4	First-Hand Knowledge of Teacher's Role	35	
14	Provide Good Models for Teaching	30	
7	Opportunity to Meet/Work Teachers	29	
18	College Teaching Models Compatible	25	Median
5	Provide Different Models Instruction	26	
8	Develop Disciplining Strategies	24	
17	Compatible models Between College and School Setting	23	
16	Familiar With Goals & Objectives of the Program	21	
9	Identifying Behavioral Problems/Exceptionalities	19	
12	Develop Teaching Skills Subject Matter	16	
10	Interacting With School Administrators	1	
11	Working With More Than One Teacher	-5	

Figure 1: Perceived ratings of Candidates Ranked from High to Low Values.

Table 1

Student Reaction to Completion
of Field Experiences

Item Choice	Number	% Total
"A waste of time"	2	.04
"Confirmed my desire to teach"	19	40
"Raised questions about desire to be a teacher"	2	.04
"Raised questions about grade levels"	7	15
"No effect on me"	1	.02
"The best experience I had"	16	34
Other (Write-Ins)	0	0

for item numbers 5, 8, 17, 16, 9, 12, 10, and 11. Excluding #16, these outcomes were not surprising since the field experiences for Education 201 and 202 are not necessarily structured to effect such exposure. However, aside from items 10 and 11, some students, in some settings, do perceive that these outcomes occur.

The overall personal reactions of the students, summarized in Table 1, are very favorable.

Summary

1. Students in Education 201 and 202 perceive their early field involvement as beneficial and valuable.

2. Students are not overly aware of the related purposes and goals of the field experience program, even though these are stated in course syllabi and appear again in printed guidelines for field experiences, and are discussed during orientation. "Why they have to do this?" is a major topic during orientation.

3. Field experiences generally contribute to professional development through observation of teaching styles, methods, and skills; developing rapport with learners and teachers; and becoming aware of individual differences in learners.

4. Students are very satisfied with the level of support and assistance provided for them by the college instructor responsible for the field experience.

5. Dependent upon the setting, some students are exposed to a wide range of professional practice and have opportunities to learn, more specifically, about discipline practices, exceptionalities, and teaching techniques in subject matter areas.

6. Students perceive field experiences for teacher education candidates as a necessary and important requirement.

7. Opportunites for interacting with school administrators or working with more than one teacher are nil.

Discussion

Early field experiences are perceived by teacher education candidates as worthwhile and generally contributing to their professional development. Some settings do provide opportunities for students to learn specifically about disciplining practices, exceptionalities, and subject-related teaching techniques, although these areas are not specifically included in guideline activities. Students are very satisfied with the level of support and assistance given them by their college coordinator(s) for field experiences.

Unexpectedly though, students are not overly familiar with the goals and the objectives of these field experiences. Re-orientation efforts may be needed to correct this situation. Ideally, students should be conversant about the overall goals of field experiences and their expected roles in these settings. Supervisors in the field may not be receptive when students cannot articulate the purpose of their presence.

The overall personal reaction to field involvement is very favorable. Students are looking first-hand at teaching as a career. Many are reaffirming their desire to continue; a few are indicating dissatisfaction (and will probably opt out); and others are raising questions about grade levels. The evidence seems to indicate a "meaningful set" is being induced by these early experiences.